

## Case 3156

***Chiton lepidus* Reuss, 1860 (currently *Lepidochitona lepidus*; Mollusca, Polyplacophora): proposed conservation of the specific name**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application is to conserve the specific name of *Chiton lepidus* Reuss, 1860 for a chiton (currently known as *Lepidochitona lepidus*, family ISCHNOCHITONIDAE, subfamily LEPIDochITONINAE) from the Middle Miocene of Europe. The name has been in use for the taxon for 140 years but it is a junior primary homonym of *Chiton lepidus* Gould, 1859, the name for a Recent species (family ISCHNOCHITONIDAE, subfamily ISCHNOCHITONINAE). Gould's name is currently treated as a junior subjective synonym of *Chiton luzonica* Sowerby, 1842 (now *Lepidozona luzonica*), an Indo-Pacific species from the Philippines to the Arabian Gulf.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; *Lepidochitona lepidus*; *Lepidozona luzonica*; ISCHNOCHITONIDAE; ISCHNOCHITONINAE; LEPIDochITONINAE; chitons; Miocene; Europe; Indo-Pacific.

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1. Gould (1859, p. 164) described *Chiton (Lepidopleura) lepidus* from the China Sea at 24° North. He did not mention any specimens (see also Gould, 1862, p. 118). In 1892 Pilsbry (p. 117) quoted the manuscript notes of Philip P. Carpenter (see Pilsbry, 1893, p. iv for their history): 'The girdle scales are those of *Lepidopleurus* [= *Lepidozona*], except that the imbrication is irregular', and placed *Chiton lepidus* in the genus *Ischnochiton* Gray, 1847.

2. The specific name *lepidus* Gould, 1859, in combination with the generic name *Ischnochiton*, was used by Nierstrasz (1905, p. 29), Leloup (1941, p. 12) and Kaas & Van Belle (1980, p. 73). In 1964 Johnson (p. 100, pl. 22, fig. 2) selected a syntype (USNM 1865 in the National Museum of Natural History, Washington) as the lectotype, noting a second specimen (USNM 24263) that was 'reduced to plates' as the 'paratype' (i.e. paralectotype). In 1990 Kaas & Van Belle (p. 51) synonymized *Chiton (Lepidopleura) lepidus* with *Chiton luzonica* Sowerby, 1842 (p. 104), a species described on six specimens from the Philippines (Albay, Isle of Luzon and Sarsogon). A lectotype for *C. luzonica* Sowerby (specimen BMNH 19790175/1 in the Mollusc Section of the Natural History Museum, London) was designated by Kaas & Van Belle (1987, p. 245, fig. 111, map 52). The synonymy between *lepidus* Gould and *luzonica* has been maintained (see Kaas & Van Belle, 1998, p. 109 and Slieker, 2000, pp. 52, 147, pl. 14, fig. 3) and the species is currently known as *Lepidozona luzonica* (Sowerby, 1842).

3. In 1860 Reuss (p. 259, pl. 8, figs. 12–13) established a new species *Chiton lepidus* from the Middle Miocene of Rudoltice, Bohemia. The name was adopted by Rochebrune (1883, p. 62) in combination with *Tonicia* Gray, 1840. In 1897 Sacco

(p. 90, pl. 7, fig. 32) identified Reuss's species as *Chiton marginatus* Pennant, 1777; subsequent authors, however, have treated *Lepidochitona marginata* either as a distinct species or as a synonym of *L. cinerea* (Linnaeus, 1767). With the exception of Laghi (1977, p. 105), who treated *lepidus* Reuss as a synonym of *L. cinerea*, the name *lepidus* has consistently been used (see Procházka, 1900, pp. 72, 117; Sulc, 1934, p. 10, pl. 1, figs. 13–15, with bibliography, and Malatesta, 1962, p. 157), and the species has for some time been placed in the genus *Lepidochitona* Gray, 1821 (see Baluk, 1965, p. 370; Baluk, 1971, p. 459, pl. 4, figs. 6–12; Baluk, 1984, p. 288, pl. 7, figs. 1–3; Van Belle, 1981, p. 47; Dell'Angelo & Forli, 1994, p. 228 and Dell'Angelo, Palazzi & Pavia, 1999, p. 265).

4. The specific name of *Chiton lepidus* Reuss, 1860 is a junior primary homonym of *C. lepidus* Gould, 1859. However, neither species is now included in the original 'catch-all' genus *Chiton*, and they have not been included in the same genus since 1883, when Rochebrune placed *lepidus* Reuss in *Tonicia* Gray, 1840 (see para. 3 above). With the exceptions of Sacco (1897) and Laghi (1977), the name *lepidus* Reuss has had continuous usage since publication and, to my knowledge, no author has mentioned the homonymy. I am not aware of a junior synonym for the species. To avoid the confusion which would result from upsetting the long-established usage of *lepidus* Reuss, 1860, and in the interest of nomenclatural stability, I propose that the name be conserved. Gould's (1859) name *lepidus* is treated as a junior synonym and the species is currently known as *Lepidozonia luzonica* (Sowerby, 1842).

5. Article 23.9.5 of the Code records that 'When an author discovers that a species-group name in use is a junior primary homonym of another species-group name also in use, but the names apply to taxa not considered congeneric after 1899, the author must not automatically replace the junior homonym; the case should be referred to the Commission for a ruling under the plenary power and meanwhile prevailing usage of both names is to be maintained'.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to rule that the specific name *lepidus* Reuss, 1860, as published in the binomen *Chiton lepidus*, is not invalid by reason of being a junior primary homonym of *Chiton lepidus* Gould, 1859;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *lepidus* Reuss, 1860, as published in the binomen *Chiton lepidus* (not invalid by the ruling in (1) above).

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